

METHODISM IN CENTRAL CHINA



GEORGE A. CLAYTON



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METHODISM IN CENTRAL
CHINA



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BY THE

REV. G. A. CLAYTON

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METHODISM IN CENTRAL CHINA



CHAPTER I

THE TAI PING REBELLION AND METHODISM

THE great rebellion in China and the commencement of the work which is now known as the Wuchang District, are inseparably linked together in the annals of the past. The standard of rebellion was raised in 1851 by Hung Hsiu-chuan, the 'Heavenly King,' a man who was well acquainted with Christian truth and intimate with the missionaries in Canton, both of our own Church and of the London Mission. One great feature of

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his rule was that wherever his troops went they destroyed all temples, overthrew all idols, and proclaimed the one true God. More than this, for the first few years of the movement the Heavenly King invited Protestant missionaries to come to the territories he had occupied and preach both to his troops and to the conquered populace. Later he found that the pure truths of Christianity did not accord with his plans ; and, instead of amending the latter, he perverted the former and established 'another gospel.'

At the time (1860-2) when the movement seemed more and more likely to succeed, and a mighty revolution in the thought of the Chinese people about idolatry appeared imminent, Josiah Cox, the pioneer missionary of Methodism in Central China, was on furlough in England. At 'the China Breakfast meeting' a mail from China was handed to him. It contained a letter from his colleague, the Rev. George Piercy, and a remarkable message, written on yellow silk,

from Hung Jin, better known as the Shield King, the brother of the Heavenly King, and himself once a Wesleyan evangelist. Mr. Piercy's letter urged Mr. Cox to go to Nanking, the southern capital of China, and at that time the headquarters of the rebels, and endeavour through his personal friendship with the Shield King to correct the erroneous teaching into which the rebels were falling. The Shield King in his letter expressed the hope that his presence at Nanking would be the means of spreading Christianity, and desired Mr. Cox to go and assist him in preaching the gospel. As was to be expected, Mr. Cox urged on the audience the need for prompt action, and his speech made such an impression that in August of the same year he was on his way back to China, with permission to establish a new mission in Central or North China, and either amongst the rebels or in one of the ports just opened to Westerners under Lord Elgin's treaty.

Mr. Cox first visited his old fellow

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workers at Canton and consulted with them. Then he proceeded to Shanghai, where he learnt that the missionaries of the C.M.S., L.M.S., and other societies had been visiting Nanking, Wuhu, and scores of other towns under the sway of the rebels ; and the united testimony was that the attempt to establish missions among the rebels was useless. Nevertheless, Mr. Cox proceeded to carry out the programme arranged for him.

When he entered the palace of the Shield King at Nanking, Mr. Cox found that dignitary unable to offer him either help or a hearty welcome owing to the determination of his brother to establish the new religion which he had invented to suit his own ends. 'Mr. Cox,' said he, 'you know I have been friendly to foreigners and missionaries. This has involved me in trouble, and has led to my degradation. I should have hastened to welcome an old friend, but I am ashamed to see you, and I fear that your stay may further involve me.'

Noting his evident fear, Mr. Cox offered to withdraw, but first urged him not to let his position endanger his own salvation, and asked him if there was a favourable opening in Nanking for missions. The Shield King thanked Mr. Cox for his counsels, but told him that he could do nothing to help him. 'We permit missionaries to visit our towns,' said he, 'but we do not promise to protect them. If they preach against the heavenly title of our king, our followers may rise up and kill them at any minute; and their death, if we had promised protection, would involve us in trouble with foreign nations.' Without any further opportunity to converse with the Shield King, Mr. Cox passed a day in the palace. At one of the meals provided for him, four were seated at the table—Mr. Cox and his writer, the royal heir, and a high official. Mr. Cox was interested to discover in the heir an ex-pupil of a Mission School at Hong Kong, and in the official a coolie whom he had in earlier days tipped for

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carrying his boxes ! An attempt to get into the morning service was prevented on the ground that 'the worship is different from yours and will not please you.' Later in the day the quondam coolie told Mr. Cox that 'missionaries ought not to come, for the doctrines are different, and the Heavenly King will not allow doctrines other than his own.' Strange to say, there was at the very time a missionary of the Baptist Mission, the Rev. Issachar Roberts, living in the palace. The Heavenly King was under the sway of a superstition that calamities would follow this man's removal, and so he remained there in peace, preaching and distributing books with caution, but he assured Mr. Cox that there was no hope that regular mission work could be established. Amongst other things he said that only a fortnight earlier two copyists had been summarily decapitated for failing to remove from the proofs of a tract some words which conflicted with the Heavenly King's teaching.

The conviction thus forced on our pioneer's mind that the Tai Ping leaders were no longer open to receive Christian teaching was deepened by his finding some edicts in which the leader of the rebels denied that there is any Holy Spirit, affirmed that Jesus is inferior to the Father, and alleged that he, the rebel, shared divinity with the Son of God. These edicts were issued in the name of a Trinity comprising the Heavenly Father, the Heavenly Brother (Christ), and the Heavenly King (himself). 'I did not apprehend,' says Mr. Cox, 'that, on a nearer view of these insurgents, they would appear so bereft of hopeful elements.'

Prompted by the idea that something might be accomplished away from the immediate influence of the leader, Mr. Cox next took passage in a small sailing-boat for Ningpo, where he arrived on January 11. He found that when the city was captured by the rebels the missionary houses and chapels had remained un-

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injured, whilst the idols had been broken to pieces with an unsparing hand ; but he also found that the efforts of the missionaries had received little encouragement from the rebels, they being sensual, cruel, and quite indifferent to gospel truth. A visit to a neighbouring rebel centre proved even more disheartening, and Mr. Cox therefore returned to Shanghai.

It will be remembered that when Mr. Cox left England, he had before him two alternative plans. The first had now, by actual investigation, been proved to be impracticable. It remained therefore to try the second, and at once the problem arose whether to proceed north to Tientsin or west to Hankow. Guided, as events had proved beyond dispute, by the good hand of God, our pioneer took passage for the latter place, and landed at what is now the splendid British Concession, in March, 1862, making his way thence, through the ruins left by the rebels, to the little house in the heart of the native

city where Griffith John, of the London Mission, had temporarily established himself.

Josiah Cox will ever be remembered by the Methodist Church as the pioneer of her work in Central China, and surely the great results that have accrued from his enterprise must be attributed to the spirit in which he inaugurated the work. Climbing one day to the top of Tortoise Hill, he looked down on the ancient city of Hanyang, just rising from the desolation of the rebellion ; on the far-stretching walls of Wuchang, a former capital of the empire, and now the seat of the provincial government ; and on Hankow, the great trading centre populated by some 600,000 Chinese. 'The sight of those vast multitudes,' he wrote, 'and the thought of their spiritual darkness, stirred my spirit and led me to prayer ; and in that prayer was the commencement of the Mission.'

On the last day of the month in which he landed at Hankow, Mr. Cox wrote to the Secretaries of the Society, proposing

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the immediate establishment of the new mission at Hankow, and asking that seven men might be sent—two for Hankow, three for Wuchang, two for Kiukiang. What a mighty faith was here ! To claim for the Methodist Church Hankow and Wuchang was large-hearted ; to include Kiukiang, 150 miles away and the entrance to yet another of China's vast provinces, was worthy of the noblest of the early Methodist preachers, those men who put whole counties in one 'round.' Nor did Mr. Cox forget that our work must be many-sided, for in this very first appeal for men for Central China we read : 'One should be trained for educational work, one a medical missionary, and, before all, one man of high literary qualification.' Chapels, schools, hospitals, and printing-presses were all grasped by the eye of faith ere even the missionary could point to a piece of land that belonged to the Wesleyan Missionary Society ! We must not omit the sentence of the letter which says, 'Instead of

proceeding further north, I purpose to await the arrival of the new men and assist them in their initial difficulties.' What Missionary Committee could resist an appeal when backed by such decisive action ?

Even in the twentieth century it takes several weeks for a letter from Hankow to reach London, but in the sixties it took several months, for there was then no steam mail-service. It was not, therefore, till the middle of August, 1862, that Mr. Cox received the answer to his letter, sanctioning the commencement of the mission. During the intervening months the pioneer had tried in vain to rent premises in the provincial capital. One offer made to him may be quoted as an instance of his difficulties. A man had a house which he said was in every way suitable, but he would not rent it. If the foreigner wanted it he must purchase it outright. The price was to be one thousand pounds, and the premises were not to be inspected till purchased !

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Mr. Cox therefore turned his attention to Hankow, where much land, covered with the ruins of houses burnt by the rebels, was being offered at low rates. So impressed was he with the propriety of an immediate purchase that in August he wrote to the Committee that these opportunities, if lost, would never return, and asking authority to purchase. In the interval he proposed to rent, but circumstances were too much for him, and in October he wrote to the Committee to confess that he had on his own authority purchased a site for £133! This site was not within the bounds of the new British Concession. 'My own practice,' he explained some years later, 'had been to throw myself as much as possible among the Chinese, and I thought it desirable that our Mission should strengthen its preaching by the influence of our Christian homes and of our everyday life among the people. I therefore abandoned Concession advantages, and purchased a piece of land situated about three miles from

the British Consulate, and surrounded by a busy, noisy Chinese population.'

In order to complete the purchase Mr. Cox had to give a draft on the Mission House for £100, and was naturally concerned lest it should be dishonoured. But in due course there came a reply, penned by the now sainted author of *The Tongue of Fire*, bidding Mr. Cox dismiss his fears. The letter concluded with a beautiful prayer: 'I pray that the land that you have secured in that vast city may remain while the world stands a heritage of the Church, and become the site of many an event which angels will rejoice over, and men unborn will weep for joy to see.' How that message cheered the heart of the solitary worker! 'I carried it about with me for some weeks, and I remember after the Watch-night that year going up to the place where the foundations were being laid for our chapel. It was a beautiful moonlight night; and I stood in the centre of the piece of ground with that letter in my pocket, and prayed

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to God that the prayer of the Mission House might be answered.'

Whilst the chapel was being built, Mr. Cox received from Griffith John, of the L.M.S., a gift the value of which to our Church in China cannot be estimated by the human mind—the service of Chu Shao Ngan, who became Mr. Cox's helper, and who served Christ, first as evangelist, and from 1876 as a Methodist minister, by a blameless life and with unswerving loyalty till his death in 1899.¹

May, 1863, found our pioneer setting out in the name of his Master on a journey to see what openings there were in the provinces of Hunan and Sz-chuan. In a programme which he had posted to the Committee two months earlier, he had suggested that he remain in Hankow till two other missionaries had arrived and could manage alone. Then he hoped to open Wuchang and stay there in like manner. Following the same lines he would then move on to Kiukiang in

¹ See *Chu and Lo, Two Chinese Pastors*, in this Series.

Kiang-si, to Yochou in Hunan, and then to Tientsin and Peking. Although it is evident that this journey to Hunan was part of the great plan which Mr. Cox had ever before him, we must not divert our attention to it now. It had no immediate results, though it is interesting to note that in our recent advance into Hunan¹ we are carrying into fruition one of Mr. Cox's earliest plans.

Soon after the journey was completed, Mr. Cox took another great step on his own responsibility. Hearing that land in the suburbs of Kiukiang was selling at low rates, he went down to investigate; but not having time to stay, he arranged with a friendly trader to open negotiations. The trader found a fine plot of land about four acres in extent, the price of which was so reasonable that he bought it outright! And so Mr. Cox included the cost, £135, in his account with the Committee, saying, 'This amount of money cannot embarrass the Committee.' But

¹ See Chapter VII.

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the American War had broken out, the missionary income was falling, and the Committee did feel embarrassed ; so that when in 1865 Mr. Cox went to Kiukiang to open up the work, he was forbidden to do so by the Mission House. The land, be it added, did not pass away from Methodism, for in 1870 it was sold by us to the American Methodists, and they have continued ever since to represent there the great Church of which we are but one branch.

Mr. Cox's first colleague arrived in May, 1864. This was Dr. Porter Smith, who proved so eager to commence his work that, with Mr. Cox as his interpreter, he opened a little dispensary on the main street of Hankow, on July 8, within two months of his landing. The plan adopted then was to dispense medicines gratuitously, the waiting patients being addressed by Mr. Cox and Mr. Chu on the truths of the gospel. Such was the novelty of the institution that in the first year no less than 18,764 different patients

were registered ! The persons applying were of every rank, from the haughty grandee to the poorest beggar, and from every province in the empire. But when, a little later, it became clear that much medicine was being wasted on people with trivial complaints who only came once to gratify their curiosity, a change was made, and a small fee charged for all but women and children and accident cases. The number of patients dropped to 9,000 in the second year as the result, but the doctor had the satisfaction of knowing that he was treating people who needed his services, and not giving away valuable drugs to people who did not mean to take them.

A doctor without a hospital is unable to treat properly any serious cases which are brought under his notice ; and so, three months after the dispensary was opened, two little Chinese houses were rented for use as a hospital and an appeal sent home for funds. By the aid of a grant from the Committee, and subscrip-

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tions of no less than £194 from grateful patients, a hospital was erected and opened in 1866, forty-two persons being received into the wards. Of these forty-two in-patients eight were women ; for, great as is the aversion of all Chinese women to allow a male doctor to treat their complaints, the confidence of the natives in the skill of Dr. Smith overcame all their scruples. At the same time that he was thus employed in Hankow, Dr. Smith was working a dispensary across the river at Wuchang, and doing much to prepare the people there for the settlement of our missionaries in their midst.

The figures for 1867 were even more remarkable than those of 1866, for the doctor treated 11,433 out-patients and 124 in-patients. The strain which this must have placed upon Dr. Smith, working as he was without a colleague and with only such Chinese assistants as he himself could make time to train, can hardly be estimated. Strength was given to him from above, and he continued his successes

year by year till his return to England in 1870, at the conclusion of his agreement.

Some months before he left, the Committee sent out Dr. E. P. Hardey to study Chinese and thus be prepared to succeed Dr. Smith at the post which he had filled with so much honour to himself, with so much benefit to the sufferers under his care, and with so much advantage to the interests of the mission. Coming to a centre where he had had no predecessors in the work, and facing all the difficulties which arise when a Western surgeon proposes to perform operations never attempted by a Chinese doctor, it is to Dr. Smith's undying credit that when he left Hankow the fame of the hospital had been made, and confidence in it established. Even in the bigoted ranks of the officials the doctor's skill was valued, the names of the daughter of the Literary Chancellor, the wife and mother of the Provincial Salt Commissioner, the brother of the Governor, and other such notables appearing in his annual reports.

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So assiduous had Dr. Hardey been in the study of the language, that when Dr. Smith left he was ready to carry on the medical work without an interpreter, and during his five years of service the patients treated averaged nearly 10,000 per annum. But his health began to fail, and when he reached England on furlough in 1875, he found himself unable to return. This was a great disappointment both to him and to the mission, for as a result the hospital had to be closed, and remained so, save for a few months, till the arrival of Dr. Hodge in 1887. The dispensary was, however, carried on by such of the missionaries as had knowledge of simple remedies, J. S. Fordham being one of the chief helpers.

We must now return in thought to notice that the first additions to the evangelistic staff were made in 1865. 'Be assured,' wrote William Arthur, 'that as soon as we can satisfy ourselves that Providence has given us the comrades you want, they shall be sent.' History

proves that in sending William Scarborough and David Hill the Committee had found the right men.

At the close of the year in which these two brethren landed, Mr. Cox convened the first District Synod, and for the first time a schedule was prepared for the Annual Report, the six entries mentioning 'one chapel, four missionaries, one catechist, four members, four on trial, and sixteen attendants at public worship.' It was decided that David Hill should occupy Wuchang and William Scarborough remain at Hankow, while Josiah Cox went to Kiukiang; but when the Committee forbade the opening of the Kiukiang work, Mr. Cox rejoined Mr. Scarborough in Hankow.

Even while busy with his studies, Mr. Hill gave much thought and prayer to the question of land-purchase in Wuchang. But that city had no welcome to extend to the European. 'Yesterday Dr. Smith and I went over to Wuchang,' wrote he, 'to see a piece of ground which is now

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on sale. It is in some respects a most eligible site ; and, in case no better should turn up, we might endeavour to purchase *if we could*, but that appears to be questionable, since the owner has 'resolved neither to sell to a Canton man nor a Ningpo man ; nor, worst of all, to a foreigner.' In March, 1867, patience was, however, partially rewarded, a little house up one of the narrow passages from the main street being rented successfully. It was built mostly of wood, and was anything but convenient ; but for some years it had to do duty as a house for Messrs. Hill and Napier, as a chapel, and as a dispensary.

Two months later the first convert in Wuchang was baptized, and Mr. Hill's Chinese pundit, Lo, applied to be placed on trial. This man was led to Christ in a remarkable way. He was invited to go as tutor to a well-to-do family in Shansi. Before accepting this invitation, Lo went into a neighbouring temple to seek guidance from the idol. On the slip which he drew there were four lines of

rhyme which told him that he must wait for a time, and that he would then hear of the Great Creator and find peace. The Shansi offer was therefore declined, and in its stead he applied for the post of pundit to the missionary. Reading the Scriptures with his pupil, Lo found that they contained the revelation of the true Creator, and from the time of that discovery he advanced step by step into full faith in the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ.

In July Mr. Hill received from his landlord notice to quit. Instead of quitting he entered into quiet negotiations, and persuaded the landlord to sell his house to the mission, a permanent foothold being thus gained. A few months later, one morning when Mr. Hill was across at Hankow, the great powder magazine in the city exploded, houses were wrecked on all sides, shot and shell whistled through the air, and many persons were killed. One fragment of shell fell into Mr. Hill's room, at the exact spot where he usually

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sat studying, but otherwise the premises were not injured. The aid which Dr. Smith and Mr. Hill rendered at the time to the injured did much to win popular approval for their work.

About this same time the Hankow ministers had seized an opportunity to purchase a site in Hanyang, and ere the year closed a little chapel was opened there. So that within two years of the arrival of the reinforcements, Mr. Cox had developed the work in each of the Central Cities,¹ and when he returned to England on furlough in 1869, he was able to report to the Committee that his mission had been accomplished, and that the Wuchang District was established.

¹ The work in the Central Cities is referred to so frequently in the story of David Hill, that a separate chapter of this book has not been devoted to that subject.

CHAPTER II

DAVID HILL'S FIRST COUNTRY CIRCUIT

WHEN the American Methodists took up the work in Kiukiang, from which Mr. Cox had withdrawn, their missionaries itinerated up the river towards Hankow, whilst ours itinerated down towards Kiukiang. Hence it came to pass that both they and we endeavoured to evangelize the Kwang Chi county, which extends inland behind the large market town of Wusueh. This town lies on the banks of the Yang Tze, about thirty-five miles above Kiukiang.

Early in 1870, a colporteur, Tsang Ho-chin, sent down by David Hill from Wuchang, was attacked while visiting this region, and all his books destroyed. Feeling that he must protect the man, Mr. Hill mentioned the matter to the

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County mandarin, but this official angrily refused to interfere. On his return to Hankow, Mr. Hill mentioned this rudeness to the British Consul, who referred to it casually in a letter to the Minister at Peking. This latter official happened just then to be trying to show the Chinese Foreign Office that the County mandarins were not anxious to protect Europeans, and used the Kwang Chi case as an illustration. The Foreign Office, being nettled, sent down orders that the Kwang Chi mandarin be dismissed at once. The immediate result was a movement towards the Church of a number of men who were actuated by a desire to be allied to the powerful foreigner, rather than by a desire to learn the truth ; and in 1871, eight persons came from a little country village called Li Meng Chiao to Hankow as a deputation, asking that a missionary might be sent to them, and offering to provide a house as a residence. At the time Mr. Cox was on furlough, Messrs. Scarborough and J. W. Brewer were in Hankow, and David Hill

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was alone at Wuchang, so that no missionary could be spared. The place and the surrounding region were, however, visited ; and, when the number of inquirers grew, a native brother was placed in charge of the work. This man had had no previous training, and ere long so abused his authority that he had to be recalled.

This failure led the missionaries to feel that the work was too far from Wuchang for them to exercise adequate pastoral oversight, and proposals were actually made to hand over Li Meng Chiao to the American Methodists, who had meanwhile opened a chapel in Wusueh. But at this juncture Mr. Cox returned and took over the Wuchang work, leaving David Hill free for the new country station, so that instead of our handing over our work to the Americans, they generously handed over their chapel at Wusueh to us. Thus did David Hill find himself in charge of the Kwang Chi and Wusueh Circuit—a circuit which included in its area tens of

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thousands of heathen Chinese, but which had no members, no house for the missionary, and only one small chapel.

Mr. Hill felt that the best way to work was to itinerate all over a large area, and so we find him at the county town of Kwang Chi, twenty miles inland from Wusueh ; at Lung Ping, where, till the Tai Ping rebels destroyed it, the trade of those parts centred ; at Li Meng Chiao, the timber mart ; at the old and important town of Chi Chow, the chief city of the next county ; at Tien Chia Chen, once the rendezvous of the great fleet of junks which carried the tribute rice from Hupeh to Peking ; and finally at Hsing Kuo, another county town, where trade and prosperity were withering under the terrible blight of opium. Hither and thither he went, preaching, bookselling, disputing with scholars, distributing charity, so that now, nearly thirty years since he left this work, the name of Li Hsiu Shan is respected on all hands.

The first baptism took place on August

David Hill's First Country Circuit 35

11, 1872, when four were baptized at Wusueh. At the Synod of 1874, the loneliness which had at times been a heavy burden to Mr. Hill was removed by the appointment of Joseph Race as his colleague. With the exception of two years, Mr. Race exercised the whole of his ministry in the Kwang Chi Circuit, being suddenly smitten down with typhoid in 1880, and passing away after an illness of nine days, praising God that He had permitted him to become a missionary. His medical knowledge, self-acquired after he had entered on his missionary career, proved of great value. It gave him a marvellous influence over the people, and was a powerful means of breaking down superstition. 'Firm of purpose, energetic and resolute in action, with a quick and loving heart and active mind, earnest and eager to get and to do good,' Mr. Race was eminently suited to take over the circuit when Mr. Hill left for the famine-stricken North in 1878.

Much could be written of the converts

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Much could be written of the converts

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increased, he set apart the best room in his house as a place of prayer. But he was not to stay in his own little circle. The missionaries invited him to become one of their colleagues, and in so doing set before him two methods—one, that he become an ordinary salaried assistant, the other, that he render voluntary unpaid assistance. He chose the latter, and reaped his reward in the immensely increased influence he gained. For many years he preached the gospel, sold Christian books, swept the chapel and dusted the benches, without receiving any salary whatever, though his own means were at times extremely meagre. On one occasion, being rallied for his folly by an old acquaintance, he said, 'You say I am a fool to do all this menial work for the foreigner. You are mistaken. I am not doing it for the foreigner at all. I am doing it for the Lord Jesus Christ.' Such was the spirit of the old man all through his career, though in later years he had to accept a small remuneration

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so that he might help his poorer relatives.

Appointed near the end of his life to the charge of the work in his native village, he had the joy of seeing the room too small to accommodate those who flocked to hear the word. He then, with the help of his brethren, erected a new and larger chapel, which stood till it was destroyed by the Boxers in 1900. At the time of his death in 1888, there were in the Tai Tung Hsiang district twenty-four members, sixty members on trial, and a large number of adherents as the direct or indirect fruit of his labours.

Events in a Chinese circuit follow one another with the same regularity as at home; and so we pass on to the year 1884, the year of the Tsang persecution case. The brother of one of the Christians had died, and was in due course committed to the grave. On the third day after the funeral, a man in the village was taken ill, and his friends at once concluded that the illness was the result of some evil influence proceeding from the Christian grave.

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Headed by the chief elder of the village, they demanded that the coffin should be disinterred, in order that the evil influence might be stayed and the sick person healed. The Christians refusing to consent, the mob became more and more excited, and in the end dug up the coffin. Such an act is in China a capital offence, so that it was not long before the heathen were made to realize the untenability of their position, and the coffin was replaced.

The premises at Lung Ping were opened with great rejoicing in 1884. Not so the premises at Chi Chow; for just when the buildings were ready, a mob of the lowest of the people, excited and led by a man who from the first was bitterly opposed to us, attacked the place and did a great deal of damage. The authorities intervened, the ringleaders were arrested, and compensation was paid at once. Mr. Bramfitt did not, however, allow the leaders to be punished, save that they were bound over to keep the peace. From that day to this there has been no further trouble.

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Four years later the case known as the Lan Family Case was begun. The question at issue was whether a man who entered the Christian Church could be deprived of all his clan rights, and treated *as if he were dead*. The missionaries used all the means in their power to induce the heads of the Lan clan to cease from thus persecuting the Christians, but in vain. At last, it being found that the case was being treated by the heathen in all parts as a test one, the intervention of the British Ambassador was secured, and the Chinese authorities, after many attempts to evade the issue, in 1892 decreed that a Christian must be treated as an ordinary member of his clan in all respects.

At the beginning of 1889, the first two workers sent out by Mr. Champness went to reside at Wusueh while they studied Chinese : they were S. J. Hudson and A. C. Tollerton. The former, after one year at Wusueh, went to Chi Chow, and there he toiled for Christ till his health failed, and he had to go home in 1893.

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How deep was his love for China may be seen from the account of his last days on earth. 'China, and only China, and the work that needed to be done, the converts that needed training, the preachers that wanted helping, and the heathen who were dying without Christ—these were ever on his mind and filled his thought. At the last, when it became evident that life was near its close, his mind in the wanderings of extreme weakness still turned to China.' He died on August 26, 1894, almost his last words to Mrs. Champness being, 'If I only get on my feet, you must let me go.' Mr. Tollerton, after his year of study, went to Lung Ping. There he died on May 15, 1891, from an attack of smallpox. 'As a missionary, Mr. Tollerton was an extraordinary man. Few men have more quickly mastered the language, and yet fewer have made such an impression on the Chinese,' writes one who knew him well. 'The nearest approach to popular enthusiasm I have seen in China occurred on his last visit

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to Chi Chow, when after a glowing time in his evening address to outsiders, the neighbours made him promise to preach again the next night, and at the time appointed came and clamoured for him till he fulfilled his promise.' Such were the two first 'Joyful News' men in China, and in God's good providence they lived in and died for the Wusueh circuit.

Yet another such life we have to record. On December 30, 1889, Robert Bone landed in China and went to live with Mr. Tollerton at Lung Ping. Eight months later he died there, having spent the briefest period of service of any worker in the District, but even in that short time he had learned enough Chinese to enable him to herald the gospel. During his last illness, as his mind wandered, he preached for over two hours to a supposed Chinese audience, on the love of God in the gift of His Son.

The year in which this sad loss occurred had been marked by a great outburst of anti-foreign feeling. Limitations of space

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forbid our here detailing the causes of this ill-will, but we may say that it was stirred up by the literary classes of the Hunan province by means of tracts, booklets, and cartoons containing charges against Christians which are too utterly vile for reproduction in these pages. The result was that in the early summer of 1891, there was trouble all along the river from Shanghai to Kiukiang. Houses were wrecked, chapels destroyed, Christian tombs desecrated. The natural course of the wave of excitement seemed to be towards our stations at Lung Ping and Wusueh, and one hot summer day, June 5, 1891, the storm broke.

For some little time previous rumours had been afloat that the small sanatorium which had been built for the use of sick missionaries on the hills opposite Wusueh, was in reality a place where babies were boiled into medicines. On the day itself, a man was seen carrying four babies in two baskets through the street. He was taking them to the Catholic priest to be

blessed, but a man who probably wished to make mischief followed the basket-bearer and yelled that he was taking the babes to be killed. A crowd at once gathered, and the basket-bearer was dragged to one of the yamens. The mandarin did not believe the charge, but instead of acting prudently, vexed the crowd. Disorder at once followed, in the progress of which one of the babies was trampled to death. This roused the fury of the mob to its height, and they at once rushed off to destroy the mission houses. The missionaries stationed in Wusueh at the time were Mr. and Mrs. Boden, who had one baby, and Mr. and Mrs. Prothero, who had three children. On the day itself both Mr. Boden and Mr. Prothero were away at out-stations, whilst Mrs. Warren was staying with Mrs. Boden.

About five o'clock in the afternoon, Mr. Fan, the native preacher, rushed in to tell the three ladies that an attack on the premises was imminent. Some hours of intense anxiety followed ; but

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after many dangers, the ladies found refuge in the yamen, where, before the wondering yamen servants, they knelt down, and with trembling hearts and quivering lips, praised God for their deliverance, and prayed for those who might be in greater danger.

During the morning William Argent, who had only landed in China a few months previously as a 'Joyful News' evangelist, had come across the river from the sanatorium, where he had been nursing Mr. Fortune. After calling on the ladies, he had gone down to the river bank to wait for a steamer. The look-out man had just announced that a steamer was in sight, when Mr. Green, of the Imperial Customs, who lived not far from the steamer office, heard that the mission houses were on fire, and determined to go and help the ladies. His Chinese assistants and servants, who knew what was happening, begged him not to go into the town, as it would be at the risk of his life. They even seized him by the arms and tried to

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hold him ; but, like a brave Englishman, he said, ' The ladies are in danger, and I will go.' He rushed to the steamer office and called for Argent, and together they ran towards the mission houses, thinking nothing of their own safety.

As they dashed along the streets, the crowd that was pursuing the ladies saw them, and at once turned on them. Just by the chapel, Argent was struck a deadly blow with a coolie-pole, dropped upon his knees, raised his hands and cried out some English words as the mob fell upon him and beat out his life. Mr. Green ran a little farther and reached a pond, in which he stood up to his neck. For two or three hours the people threw stones at him, but the daylight was fading and very few took effect. Just after dark a mandarin came to the edge of the pond and promised to protect Mr. Green if he would come to his yamen. The promise was no doubt sincere, but Mr. Green had scarcely landed when the people set upon the two, drove away the mandarin, and killed Mr. Green.

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Meanwhile the ladies had sent a messenger to meet the steamer, and as soon as the captain knew of the peril of the missionaries he decided to land. This the Chinese authorities would not allow, but they sent the ladies and children on board. Mr. Fortune came down from the sanatorium, and messengers from the ladies reached Mr. Boden and Mr. Prothero, so that no more lives were lost.

Of the settlement of the trouble there is no need to write. Two men were executed by the officials on their own initiative—a life for each European life taken; five other men were banished, the property was replaced, and provision made for the relatives of the murdered men. But the great result was that the Imperial Government issued a decree that Christianity should be counted as one of the tolerated religions of China, that missionaries should be protected, and that converts should not be persecuted. This decree was posted on the walls of the 1,400 cities of

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China, and was thus made known to all ranks of society.

Four years after the riot, Kwang Chi and Tai Tung Hsiang were made into separate circuits. Save on four occasions the work has proceeded peaceably and uneventfully. With a brief reference to these four disturbances, this chapter shall close.

At the end of 1896 it was felt that steps should be taken to secure a permanent foothold in the neighbouring county town, Chi Shui, and J. K. Hill took the usual steps to rent premises. There was some difficulty in finding a landlord willing to rent to us, but at last a house was secured. Almost immediately the local official displayed his unfriendliness by allowing placards against Christianity to be freely posted in the town. He next ordered the landlord to reoccupy the premises and evict the preacher, but the preacher declined to withdraw. After vain attempts to secure fair treatment, the matter was placed in the hands of the consul.

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Seventy of the gentry meanwhile met at a feast and decided that the mission must not be allowed in the town, but the viceroy interposed and the gentry withdrew their opposition.

Chi Shui being occupied, J. K. Hill in 1898 turned his attention to Lo Tien, another large city. A few visits were paid, but on his last visit before leaving on furlough, Mr. Hill, after he had put up for the night at a village inn, felt a strange presentiment of danger, and while it was still dark started back home. His action saved his life, for if he had remained he would have fallen into the hands of a band of rowdies intent on his murder. No opportunity to visit Lo Tien occurred for some time, but in 1900 Mr. Scholes decided to visit it. Accompanied by an evangelist and his coolie, he reached the village from which Mr. Hill had fled. During the night two men came and woke up the evangelist, and urged the party to leave at once, as there were men in the neighbourhood waiting to kill the foreigner.

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The coolie fled in haste, but the evangelist, Mr. Liu, helped Mr. Scholes to dress in a Chinese gown, and then, leaving all their baggage behind them, they too escaped, and by side paths reached Chi Shui. This opposition at Lo Tien seems to have been stirred up by an old scholar holding the Doctor of Literature degree, for on his death in 1901, the attitude of the people changed. It will not, however, become a Methodist centre, for the Swedish Mission has developed work in that region, and we shall withdraw.

The fourth and last trouble arose in 1899, in the city of Hsing Kuo. As far back as 1872, David Hill had found the people there 'inclined for a row,' and through the intervening years they had not changed much. A chapel had been opened, however, and no serious trouble had followed. Mr. Allan was paying one of his ordinary visits, and was quietly at work in the chapel, when a mob suddenly burst in on him, and as there was no back door, he was

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entrapped. Being of powerful build, he decided to make a dash for life. His sun-helmet saved him from what would otherwise have been his death-blow, his clothes were torn to shreds ; but finally, battered and bleeding, he found refuge in a shop. Unfortunately it, too, had no back door ; so that before long Mr. Allan was driven to make another dash, and this time with such success that he remained safely hidden till he was rescued by the mandarin. No cause for the trouble has ever been found, save the fact that the official, who ultimately rescued Mr. Allan, was bitterly opposed to our work ; and since his removal from office after the riot, there has been no second disturbance. God grant that the peace may never again be broken in any part of David Hill's first country circuit.

CHAPTER III

THE LAKE DISTRICT

ALMOST midway between Wuchang, the provincial capital, and Wusueh, lies the Taye county, embracing in its area three towns, Taye, Hwang Shih Kang, and Pao An, whilst not far away are Wuchang Hsien and Chin Niu. It was therefore to be expected that in the course of his pioneer journeys, David Hill would visit these places. The date of the first visit to Wuchang Hsien is not to be discovered. As far back as April, 1869, he writes, 'The town seemed busier than before, but as apathetic to the sound of the gospel as ever,' so that even this cannot have been his first visit. The same letter does, however, describe the first visit to Pao An—'this town was quite new ground,

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and the people a little noisy'—and to Chin Niu. 'Next day we were at the port of Chin Niu. To this town I had long hoped to go, for from it my old teacher Lo, who has been in the service now for nearly four years, and who is one of our first Wuchang members, came. We went right through to the top of the street, where, finding a kind of village green, we took our stand under a chestnut-tree. A good fellow brought a stool, on which we mounted one after the other, and spoke to the increasing crowd.'

Two years later David Hill records how, on one of his journeys, he had his boat turned into the little branch river that runs into the lake, on whose farther shore Taye stands. 'We landed at Taye, where, being as far as I am aware, the first Protestant missionaries who had visited the place, we received a rather lively reception in the shape of shouts and stones ; but through the good providence of God, the district magistrate sent two runners from his yamen, who accompanied

us part way through the town and kept the people quiet.' Returning to the Yang Tze, Mr. Hill called at Shih Hwui Yao—which later became one of the termini of the first railway in Central China—and at Hwang Shih Kang. On a subsequent visit to this last place, a man who had listened attentively to the preaching came and begged Mr. Hill to go on to his boat, as he had something to say to him. 'It was a poor little boat, and he seemed a poor man. He told me he had been much troubled in conscience because of a great sin he had committed in the past, that he was afraid to die, and anxious to know if there was pardon for him, and what he must do to be saved.' The result of the conversation was that faith in Christ was implanted in Wang Teh Fu's heart. He was subsequently baptized, and three of his sons, his daughters-in-law, his grandchildren, and other relatives, have one by one united themselves to our Church.

Finding that Hwang Shih Kang seemed open to receive the gospel, George Miles,

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who at that period spent much of his time journeying in a sailing-boat up and down the river and its adjacent waterways, anchoring his boat wherever there seemed to be a chance to preach or sell tracts, visited it frequently. On one occasion a shop-keeper purchased a copy of St. Mark's Gospel, but not being at all interested in it left it on his counter. A village herbalist, Chia Kun Shan, came in, and, seeing the book, begged it. For long years he had been seeking for the true God, having abandoned idolatry for sun-worship and then given up the latter as vain. One reading of the Gospel sufficed to win his allegiance to Christ, and the next time that Mr. Miles anchored off the town, Chia boarded his boat and confessed himself to be a believer in Jesus. We may anticipate the order of events to say that, despite much and bitter persecution, he held to his new-found faith, that he sacrificed an official position rather than deny Christ, that in the twelve years which he lived after his baptism he won sixty

men, women and children in his native village to faith in Jesus, and that his dying testimony was, 'My sins are heavy enough to send me to hell, but Jesus saves.'

Meanwhile Wuchang Hsien had not shown any readiness to receive the gospel. About 1880, other ways of reaching the people there having failed, Mr. Hill rented a shop and set up a catechist named Fu in business as a seller of medicines, but the gentry saw through the plan, roused the people, and summarily ejected Fu and his stock. Fu returned again in due course, and gradually seemed to be gaining a foothold, but in 1886 another storm broke. The first sign of the impending trouble was the appearance of inflammatory placards on the city walls. One of these placards ran :

'This is to give notice to the general public, that at the present time a man named Fu, who with all his family has for many years followed a foreign religion, has removed to a shop he has rented in

the West Street, where, in conjunction with a foreign devil whom he has brought to the city, he has begun to preach his foreign doctrine ; and as he seeks to open everywhere chapels and establish schools for the dissemination of a doctrine so corrupt that it poisons the minds of the masses, and leads simple men and women astray, and as by the offer of small sums of money he would betray the youth of the city into habits of gross licentiousness under the pretence of opening a school, we, the scholars and public of the city, determine that if he shall continue in the city after the present month, we will drive him out and save the city from disaster.'

A visit was at once paid to the mandarin, who promised that the placards should be pulled down and the colporteur protected. But the promise about the placards was not fulfilled, and when worse ones were posted the colporteur withdrew. David Hill was much troubled at this withdrawal, and proceeded to remedy the matter by circulating in the town over 800 copies of

a carefully worded letter, in which the methods and objects of missionary work were explained. The attitude of the people did not, however, alter, as an incident which occurred in 1889 shows.

Mr. Fu, father of the colporteur, lived at a village some distance from Wuchang Hsien. He having been visited once or twice by Mr. Miles, the men in a neighbouring village united to put down the 'foreign sect.' One evening Mr. Fu went to this village to settle up his yearly account with a Mutual Aid Society, of which he was a member. He was informed that by becoming a Christian he had forfeited all his interest in the Society. Finding that argument was useless, Mr. Fu relit his lantern and started for home. He had not gone far before some one called to him to run for his life, as some men intent on his death were pursuing him. He extinguished his lantern and hid in some bushes, and the pursuers rushed past him. Mr. Miles, hearing of this, sent a message to the committee of the society. They

admitted that the murder was planned, but declined to do anything about it. Mr. Miles thereupon went to see them, but he was treated very contemptuously ; and when he returned to Mr. Fu's house, he found that in his absence the would-be murderer had actually been there threatening the old man ! Mr. Miles therefore asked the help of the police mandarin, who promised to bind the assailant over to keep the peace.

Thankful that things seemed settled, Mr. Miles retired to rest, but about ten o'clock there were rumours that the house was to be attacked, and not much later it was filled with men armed with sticks and spears, threatening to burn the house and kill the missionary. The latter forthwith came out of his room, and for over an hour argued with the men. At the end of that time the mob seized Mr. Fu and his son and dragged them outside the house to thrash them, but some neighbours interposed, and the mob withdrew. The next morning the mandarin sent for the

ringleader and would have had him tried for attempted murder, but Mr. Miles interposed, and offered to accept an undertaking from his relatives that he should keep the peace. This they gladly gave, and the matter ended.

Despite such painful occurrences that year was not without its encouragements. On June 30, the first Christian convert in the Taye county, Dr. Chia, was baptized. In August the first-fruits were gathered in at Chin Niu. In September the first Christian service in Hwang Shih Kang was held in the back room of an inquirer's house. At first these services were not free from interruptions. One of the inquirers was a dumb man. He was thirty-five years of age, but in the middle of one service his mother, aged sixty, came and led him away, saying to Mr. Miles as she left, 'Thank you, thank you; your motives may be good, but don't try to induce my dumb son to join you. He cannot speak for himself, so let him alone, and you will greatly oblige me.' On

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another Sabbath there was a loud banging at the door. When it was opened an elderly man entered, glared round the room, seized his grandson, a youth of nineteen years, by the queue, and marched him off home. The service was resumed, but before it was ended an old woman arrived to take away her son !

The news that services were being held soon spread, and produced at least one amusing incident. One Sunday morning a countryman came, saying that there were fifteen in his village who were coming the next day to join the church, if what he reported on his return agreed with what they had been told. They understood that the foreigner was about to form a religious society, and was willing to provide clothes and food for all who joined ! The man seemed sorely disappointed when told the real object of the services, and soon disappeared.

During 1890 Mr. and Mrs. Prothero made a visit to some of the villages round the Liang Tzu lake. At one of them an

old lady named Yang became so interested that she sent her son to Hankow to inquire further about the doctrine, with the result that the whole family, father, mother, son and daughter, believed. Just at the time when Mrs. Prothero was to visit them again, the Wusueh riots occurred. When this news reached the village, the heathen thought that they were free to work their will on the Yang family. The first assault occurred while they were at evening prayers, and the son was severely beaten. A few nights later the outrage was repeated, the son again beaten and his crops destroyed. As the family still refused to recant, the son's life was threatened and he had to flee from home. The old couple, nevertheless, clung to Christ, saying to all who bade them worship idols, 'The Lord He is God ; Him only will we serve.' Two attempts on the part of the missionary to make peace having failed, the matter was referred to the consul, who successfully demanded protection from the mandarin. The hostility did not,

however, altogether subside, as an extract from Mr. Prothero's account of his next journey shows.

‘Upon our entering the hilly regions near Chin Niu, we found that the older reports about plucking out eyes, &c., had given way to others, more local and much more irritating to the people. The cry that everywhere greeted me was, “He has come to steal *ching*” (i.e. the iron urn which is struck morning and evening to inform the ancestral spirits that they are being invoked). “He has come to gather our ancestor’s spirits to drag the steam-engines,” and other worse abuse. “Curse the spirit-stealer,” “drive out the foreign dog,” “stone him ! strangle him ! dig a pit and bury him !”—such were the things shouted after me. The men, women, and children from each village followed me to the next, saluting me as above and with stones not a few. Thankful was I when the twenty-five miles were completed and the river crossed.’

Just about the same time, Tsang Chi

Sen, the first-fruits of Chin Niu, passed home. The day before he died was the Sabbath. 'Mother,' he said, 'it is Sunday. Will Mr. Prothero come for service to-day?' Recovering from a swoon he said, 'Mother, Jesus has come to receive me,' and a little later added, 'Don't buy an expensive coffin for me or fine clothes. You know I want no idolatrous rites at my burial. A clean suit is all I need. Jesus will come and take me to a better place.'

Meanwhile Wuchang Hsien had not been neglected, and in March, 1897, the writer called there and paid the earnest-money towards the rent of a shop on the street. The renting was accomplished as quietly as possible, but ere long the evangelist was up in Hankow with news of his eviction. It was felt that the time had come to make a stand against this persistent breach of the treaties, and so the advice of the consul was sought. A few days later the provincial authorities notified the local mandarin at Wuchang Hsien

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that we must be reinstated. No individual suffered, the gentry accepted the inevitable, and from that day to this we have been in quiet possession.

In the Taye county constant progress was the order of the day. In 1892 the Christians in three villages united to erect a chapel seating 120 persons at Liu Tsu Yiu ; and, largely through the influence of Dr. Chia, it was paid for entirely by the Chinese themselves. Moved by this to a holy rivalry, the members in the Taye city early in the next year rented a small house as a chapel, and later in the same year purchased a larger house, which afforded accommodation in one of its rooms for eighty worshippers.

It will be noticed that little has been said through the present chapter about Pao An. A few visits were paid to it between David Hill's first visit in 1869 and 1896, but nothing of interest occurred. Not so when W. H. Watson and the writer arrived there on December 3, 1897. We had had a long walk in the morning, and

went into a rice-shop for a meal. That finished, we started down the main street, calling in each shop and offering to sell the tracts we had with us. But we soon discovered that while we were in the rice-shop a man had run down the street announcing our arrival, and had secured for us a lively reception. We were jostled and vilified, attempts were made to steal our books, and so on. At first it was all mere horse-play, but then a drunken man (afterwards discovered to be the local policeman!) appeared on the scene, and incited the crowd to violence. We were about half-way through the town, when we had to give up entering the shops, for each time we did so we had trouble in getting back on to the street. The threats became worse and worse, coolie-poles were freely handled, and what might have happened one cannot tell, if two men from the yamen had not come and shown us a way out of the town. Going through a side-passage, we found ourselves on the banks of the lake. It will ever be

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a proof to the writer of God's care for His servants, that it was not until we were actually in the boat that any one in the crowd thought of the stones that lay in thousands around us. When they did remember them we were out of their range. The following year another visit was paid, but this time the authorities were on the alert, and though thousands came to see the writer, none molested him at all. Since then premises have been purchased and regular work established in the town.

Fears were naturally entertained as to what would take place in the Boxer year, but they proved for the most part groundless. Only at Chin Niu was there any serious trouble, a mob doing not a little damage to the chapel, and assaulting roughly the wife and son of the preacher. But the mandarin was prompt in his intervention, and entertained the preacher and his family in his own yamen till the unrest subsided.

A word in conclusion as to the results

attained. Sixteen years have passed since Dr. Chia was baptized. The totals given at the 1905 Synod were 131 full and 43 junior members, with 48 on trial. Surely as we remember that almost each of these converts represents not, as in the home lands, a soul won from indifference to faith, but a soul won from ignorance of the nature of God to a living trust in His once-incarnate Son, we may exclaim, 'What hath God wrought !'

CHAPTER IV

UP THE HAN RIVER

THE towns of Hankow and Hanyang lie at the point where the Han, the greatest tributary of the Yang Tze, joins that mighty stream, so that, whilst the work from Hankow down towards Kiukiang called for prior attention because of the greater importance of the towns on the main river, the very position of the mission houses in the central cities was a reminder to the missionaries that further fields awaited them up the tributary. But the growth of the European staff was so slow, and the extension of the Wusueh work so rapid, that it was not till 1881 that William Scarborough decided to begin work at Hanchuan, the first county town above Hankow. Chu Hai Chin was the evangelist who first took up his abode there.

The people of the place greeted him with expressions of fear, suspicion, and ill-will. He lived at first in a small rented house, which in 1883 gave place to a little chapel erected on a purchased site, the workers having made up their minds to stay, although during the two years which had elapsed since the work was begun only two men had entered their names as inquirers.

The honour of being the first missionary to reside in Hanchuan fell to George Miles in 1886, and he at once commenced to herald the gospel in the villages around. As he was the first foreign resident, it was only to be expected that a certain amount of ill-will should be felt, and this vented itself in petty annoyance and scurrilous scandal. But by the end of the year the Sunday congregation numbered fifteen. Early in the next year Mr. Miles was transferred to Tehngan, where (as will appear in the next chapter) the need for foreign oversight was even greater than at Hanchuan, and the latter place had again

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to await the time when the staff should be equal to the work. The cause, however, continued to prosper, and in 1887 five were admitted to the church by baptism, whilst in 1888 the membership of the church was more than doubled by the baptism at one service of a Mr. Hu and his wife, their two sons, daughter-in-law, and two grandchildren, together with their cousin, Mr. Tsen, and a scholar named Lo. The gratification of the missionaries in receiving this family was greatly increased by the knowledge that their adhesion was altogether due to the faithful testimony of the native brethren. Until shortly before the baptismal service not one of the Hu family had come into contact with a European. The facts are briefly these : Mr. Tsen, a poor half-educated man, was converted in 1887, and spent considerable time, night after night, in spelling over the pages of the Gospels and other Christian books. Mrs. Hu, who lived next door, had her curiosity aroused, and made inquiry as to the nature

of the books which had so suddenly caused literary taste to develop in a quarter where it was least expected. Tsen replied that the writings contained the doctrine of one Jesus, whom he had learned to know as the Saviour of the world. Mrs. Hu, as it happened, had not been altogether neglectful of the future of her soul, having for a long time been connected with the sect of Vegetarian Buddhists, who seek by constant abstinence from animal food to atone for sin. Her interest was naturally roused by the disinterested testimony of Mr. Tsen, and at his recommendation she paid several visits to the chapel. Wishing to make perfectly sure of the reasonableness of the truth taught, she requested her son, who is fairly educated, to investigate the matter. Honest, straightforward fellow, as he appears always to have been, he had little difficulty in satisfying himself and then satisfying his mother of the truth of the doctrine of the Cross. The father was next taken into their counsels. And just about that time another Mr. Tsen,

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cousin of the Hu family, turned up after a lengthened absence from home, and his advice was also sought. He replied that he had heard more or less about the Christian religion during his absence, that his own convictions had tended towards a personal confession of Christ, and that as his relatives were on the point of taking decisive action he would throw in his lot with them. And so it came to pass that all were baptized.

Early in 1891 Pu Tsz Hsuin was appointed to Hanchuan. He had a remarkable spiritual history. He was a native of Shantung Province, who came in contact with the Rev. J. Crossett, an American Presbyterian who had felt himself called to give up his all that he might follow what he thought to be the example of Christ. This man gave up his position in the mission, dressed as a coolie, earned his living by working for the Chinese, and even lived with the beggars in their huts. Pu was so impressed with Crossett's conduct, that he gave up his shop and all to

become his disciple. When, at David Hill's invitation, Crossett came to Hankow to start the industrial branch of the Blind School, Pu accompanied him, and became so interested in our work, that he continued with us till his death in 1896. One incident will show his zeal for the work. The patients one day came earlier than usual to the dispensary at Hanchuan. Pu had not breakfasted, but he went out at once to talk to them, and continued till, fearing that he would faint, Dr. Hodge called him in. 'Oh,' he said, 'the Lord's work is a supremely important matter, but one's breakfast is of no importance at all.'

Such was the man who now threw himself earnestly into the Hanchuan work. He was joined in 1892 by J. W. Pell, and a year later the two had the joy of seeing twenty-six persons, old and young, baptized at one service. Four years of steady work followed, and then began one of those rushes into the Church with which all workers in China are

familiar. Crowds come, prompted by an idea which gets abroad, one knows not how, but which spreads fast and wide, that there is some temporal advantage to be gained by church membership. The list of names of the places where work sprung up unexpectedly is too long for insertion here. When the true principles of our faith became known, many, naturally, left us again, but a remnant remained, and by the end of 1898 the work which once demanded the time of one evangelist was made into a separate circuit with one minister and six evangelists.

When the testing time came in 1900, the brethren witnessed nobly for Christ, and not one case of falling back was reported. Prior to and during those months of unrest, the brethren at Hsien Tao Chen had suffered severely. One of them was beaten, and his son thrown into a pond; others were maltreated and not allowed to draw water, to roll their rice on the village ground, to feed their cattle on the common land, and so on. Eighty-three men

bound themselves by a solemn oath not to leave one Christian house standing, and the local mandarin supported them. The life of our esteemed Chinese minister, Lo Yu Shan,¹ was freely threatened, but he steadily went on with his work. One young man declined to pay the usual dues for idolatrous rites. The head-man of the village came with forty men, one of them armed with a butcher's knife, and asked for a very small sum. To pay would have meant outward peace, but not peace of conscience, so the young convert refused. Then the armed man struck him with his fist, and as he fell aimed a blow at him with the knife. He put up his arm to save himself, and the blow fell upon his elbow, incapacitating him for work for a long time.

When news of the troubles in the north of China reached the town, placards were posted announcing the date when Mr. Lo would be killed and the chapel destroyed. One of the leading gentry called on Mr.

¹ See *Chu and Lo, Two Chinese Pastors*, in this Series.

Lo and asked as a compromise that the Mission sign-board should be taken down for a time. With characteristic wit our brother asked how, in the event of an attack, the premises could then be identified with those which the local gentry were bound to protect. The gentleman, being out-witted on this line, invited Mr. Lo to close the chapel and come to live with him for a while. Our brother thanked him, but said that he was not afraid, for his life was in higher hands than those of a mob. Finding the preacher determined to stand by the premises, the mandarin changed his attitude, and prevented any trouble.

During the years since the Boxer trouble the work has constantly grown, though not altogether in peace. Take one example. It is a custom at Chinese New Year to take round to the houses of the people a large lantern, or rather a connected series of lanterns, arranged and carried so as to represent the sinuous twistings of an enormous dragon. The

practice is heathen and mixed with idolatry, so our members declined to share in the expenses of the display. The good man we now refer to, the only Christian in his village, declined to pay. An indignation meeting was held, and it was decided to get up a special display to irritate his feelings, and then to send the whole bill to him ! As he refused to foot the bill when it was presented, various plans were tried to force him. The matter dragged on till the silkworm season, and as he had not then paid, an organized raid was made on his mulberry-trees, which were stripped of all leaves, the silkworms being left to perish. Matters having reached this crisis, the missionaries threatened to appeal to the provincial authorities, and the persecutors then promised not to create further trouble.

Such is the history of twenty-five years of work—years during which faith was tested and patience tried ere success came, years which prove that God's word does not return to Him void.

CHAPTER V

A STORM CENTRE

A YEAR before the decision to occupy Hanchuan was taken, an opportunity to begin work in the large prefectural city of Tehngan had presented itself to the missionaries. This town is not on the banks of the Han river, but lies on the Fu, which empties itself into the Han a little below Hanchuan. Further up this same little river lies Sui Chow, to which reference will be made later in this chapter.

In the course of one of his journeys during 1880, Hu Teh Lin, a colporteur, reached Tehngan, and while traversing its streets he met a tradesman who hailed from the province of Kiangsi, of which Hu himself was a native. This common

bond led to a hearty friendship between the Christian colporteur and the master of the medicine store, and Mr. Hu told his friend why he was in Tehngan. The friend was interested somewhat in the gospel, but much more in the news that the colporteur was expecting a foreign missionary to come to the town. Mr. Wang, for such was the trader's name, at once promised that if he came the missionary should lodge in the hall of the Kiangsi Guild at Tehngan. So when J. W. Brewer arrived, he was escorted to the guild-hall, and there cared for most assiduously by Mr. Wang, while the townspeople by scores and by hundreds flocked in and out of the building to see the foreigner and ask him questions.

Comfortable as the hall was, it could not be a permanent centre for missionary work, and so Mr. Brewer asked Mr. Wang to aid him in renting a house. At first efforts were fruitless, but at last the way opened to success. In one of the quieter portions of the city there was a middle-

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class Chinese house, which had long remained both unsaleable and unlettable, because, forsooth, it was haunted ! When once a house in China acquires this reputation it becomes an almost worthless asset to the owner. It was, therefore, with something akin to joy that the owner accepted Mr. Brewer's offer to rent the haunted house for use as his residence and as a chapel.

But what pleased the owner of the house did not please the gentry of Tehngan, and when the annual festival of the God of Literature came round, and, according to custom, the most influential and scholarly men of the city met to partake of a lavish feast and to discuss matters which bore on the general interests of the city, the one theme on which all were ready to dilate was the presence of the foreigner. They were face to face with the fact that the enemy was actually in possession of a house acquired by perfectly legitimate means, that he had injured no one, and that all he had done had been acts

of benevolence. So a young man named Tsang, who was supposed to be just the man for such a task, was commissioned to visit Mr. Brewer, and try to find some fault in him which could be made the basis for inflammatory placards.

The visits were paid, but the result was the very reverse of what the gentry desired. Received politely, conversed with intelligently, humoured with information about Western ways, Mr. Tsang was attracted rather than repelled, and, instead of reviling the gospel, allied himself with the church, and in due course became a preacher.

The proposed plan of campaign having thus failed, the mission remained in peace for a few years, first Mr. Brewer and then Mr. North heralding the gospel, superintending a free school, and dispensing simple remedies. Early in 1883 Joseph Bell went up to take charge of what proved to be his only circuit, and later in the year he was joined by C. W. Mitchil, a layman, who worked in our District at

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his own charges between 1875 and his death in 1902. These brethren continued to occupy the haunted house, but were constantly on the look-out for more central premises. Several properties were offered, and at length choice was made of one near the north gate of the city. Assurances were given by the vendors that the neighbouring owners would raise no objection to the presence of the chapel in their midst. Some doubt did exist as to the attitude of the officials, but those fears were dissolved when the County mandarin willingly affixed to the deeds the seal without which no transfer of land is valid in China.

This friendliness of the officials and people was, however, only outward. When the missionaries removed from the haunted house to the new premises, they noticed that the people did not seem curious to look at their furniture, or even at them. This unusual indifference was the quiet before the storm. When, two days later, the first class-meeting was being

held in the new chapel, it was interrupted by violent blows on the front door, and by volleys of stones thrown on to the roof. Regarding this as the freak of some youths, the missionary requested two members to go out and speak to them. It proved to be anything but a freak, for one of the members was very severely handled. A message to the mandarin brought help, but ere it arrived the crowd broke up and dispersed. The next day the mandarin issued a writ for the arrest of seven of the offenders, but the gentry forbade the police to execute the warrant. The mandarin, instead of reporting at once to his superiors, overlooked this insult and left the men unpunished.

Encouraged by the result of this preliminary skirmish with the authorities, the mob attacked the premises again at half-past ten on Sunday, July 27. Having met in a distant part of the town, professedly to pray for rain, the mob streamed through the streets till it reached the chapel. Mr. Bell and Mr. Mitchil were both in bed

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at the time. Hearing a violent banging at the front door, Mr. Bell arose to see what was the matter. The door, though made of new wood nearly three inches thick, had already been battered in. And just as Mr. Bell was about to open the second door, it too was burst open, and he stood face to face with the rioters. Those nearest to him were taken somewhat aback as the foreigner asked them what was the reason of their action, but the fiercer ones quickly replied by seizing stones, boards, or whatever was at hand, and hurling them at him. Fortunately they were poor marksmen, and Mr. Bell effected a retreat without receiving serious injury. Mr. Mitchil, who had been awakened by the inrush, now came out and wished to speak to the people, but Mr. Bell dissuaded him. As the front of the premises was being rapidly demolished, doors, windows, and fittings being broken up, chairs, tables, and crockery smashed, and medicines and drugs scattered over the floor, the missionaries decided to leave

by the back door. On opening it they found a small band of men on guard, but they fell back before the foreigners, who thus escaped for the time.

On the Monday the district mandarin arrested and put in prison ten men concerned in the riot, but on the Wednesday the people held a meeting, and, either from fear of their displeasure, or, more probably, in connivance with them, the mandarin released his prisoners. The next step on the part of the people was to hold another meeting, and appoint men to watch both the front and the back doors of the chapel, and report all who attended the meetings.

Mr. Hill reached Tehngan a few days later to advise with the brethren as to the settlement of the trouble. Matters seemed to quiet down, so with characteristic thoughtfulness for others, Mr. Hill arranged to remain alone in the city, while two friends who had been in the riot went down to Hankow for a change. But just at this junction the Civil Examina-

tions began. These examinations are held in the prefectural cities, of which Tehngan is one, and always bring together a large number of students and their hangers-on, who are ready for any horseplay. They completely wrecked all that had not been destroyed in the previous riot.

The consul, of course, took the matter up, and a month later Messrs. Scarborough, Hill, and Race were once more in Tehngan trying to arrange with the officials to restore possession of the looted premises, or to make other suitable provision for the Mission. Nearly a year was spent in dealing with the matter, the missionaries, meanwhile, taking it in turns to visit the city. At last the premises were restored, and the bill for the damages paid, the missionaries in return asking that all who had taken part in the disturbances should be freely pardoned. The repairs were rapidly completed, and the chapel was dedicated to the worship of God on July 6, 1885, the day after Joseph Bell had closed his earthly career.

Taken seriously ill just after his marriage, which had been celebrated in the previous October, he was ordered to England by the doctors, and passed away in the midst of his friends. His widow, we may add, took a medical course, and returned to China under the Women's Auxiliary Society, working for the women of China till her death in 1904.

For some time after the riot the work proceeded peacefully and successfully. On January 17, 1886, a man was baptized who had been led to God in a somewhat remarkable manner. Many years before Tsang Yih-tsz had received a copy of one of the Gospels from Mr. Scarborough, who was passing through the little town where he lived ; but finding himself unable to understand it, Tsang laid it aside. In 1884, however, he picked a Christian tract by Dr. John, 'The Gate of Virtue,' out of the basket of a man who was about to consign it to the flames. He read the book, became interested in its teaching, was aroused to religious concern, and

determined to visit the Hankow chapel when next he had business in that town. He did so, and his convictions were deepened. He then began to attend the Tehngan chapel, and ere long fully believed in Christ as his Saviour. He lived to see a church established in his own house at Liang Ho Kou, became one of the pioneer workers of our church in Hunan,¹ and so adorned the grace of God that on the day of his funeral in 1898 over two hundred of his fellow townsmen walked in the procession, whilst the route from the house to the grave was lined with dense crowds, who had gathered to pay a spontaneous tribute to the memory of a good man.

In the year following Tsang's baptism two incidents occurred which are worth recording here. Tsou Teh Hsien, a man of sixty, was one of the first members admitted to the Tehngan church. For a time he held a leading position among his brethren, but then fell away. Some years

¹ See Chapter VII.

passed, and he had almost ceased to attend the services, when one day, while travelling on the Fu river, a sudden squall of wind upset the boat, and the old man was on the point of being drowned. In his distress he cried to the Lord, and the Lord delivered him, though the boatman's son perished by his side. Tsou felt that this was a call to repentance, and so joined himself again to the people of God. In the other case a new convert suffered annoyance. Hearing that this man, named Tsang, had become a Christian, the gentry of his neighbourhood came to his house and forcibly carried away his New Testament and other Christian books. As they went, Tsang said to them, 'You may take the books out of my house, but you cannot take the gospel out of my heart.'

It was with great joy that Dr. Arthur Morley was welcomed to Tehngan, when it was decided in 1886 that he should develop medical work in that city. Behind the chapel there were two large Chinese houses. These the doctor speedily con-

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verted into two large wards, capable of accommodating nearly forty beds, with operating and other rooms, and also rooms for his own use. Till the erection in 1900 of the new hospital these unsatisfactory premises were a centre whence radiated untold waves of light and blessing. In connexion with the hospital an opium refuge was established, and there, year after year, men bound by the dread curse have been set free. One such, while in the refuge, became deeply interested in the truths of the gospel, and when he returned to his far-away home, he persuaded six of his friends to abandon idolatry. Thereupon some zealous worshippers of the gods charged him before the mandarin with spreading vicious doctrines. Taken before that official and questioned, the man simply told him that he used to smoke opium, and had been cured in the Tehngan Hospital ; that, having been saved from one sin, he was praying to be delivered from every sin ; and that he could not see anything

wrong in that. 'Neither can I,' said the mandarin, and dismissed the case.

Three more years sped peacefully away, witnessing the establishment of regular services at Hsin Chien Sz, and increase in the numbers at Tehngan and Liang Ho Kou. Then suddenly came another storm. The accommodation at the chapel was very limited, and the hospital work was rapidly developing, so a site was purchased on which to erect bungalows for the use of the minister and the doctor. On November 4, 1891, whilst these buildings were in course of erection, some of the workmen employed had a fight with coolies, in the course of which two coolies were slightly injured. These men at once lay down where they were, and declared that they were mortally wounded. Mr. Warren and Dr. Morley were soon on the spot; and, finding that the injuries were far from serious, promised to have the men cared for, and to inquire into the trouble and punish the guilty. At this most of the large crowd which had

gathered were willing to disperse, but it was the examination time, and, as on the previous occasion, the students were more ready for horseplay than for justice. Just after Dr. Morley had, at Mr. Warren's request, left for one of the yamens to report the matter and to warn Mr. Rowe, who was in the town, to keep away from the buildings, some sixty students, led by one named Shu, dashed up. At their leader's bidding Mr. Warren was seized and led away to the prefect's yamen. Thinking that he could not do better than get near that building, Mr. Warren went quietly with his captors. Arrived there, he was kept standing in front of the main entrance, while Shu went forward to demand, in the name of the students, that Mr. Warren should be punished for allowing his workmen to injure the coolies, who happened to belong to the same county as many of the students.

Just at this juncture Dr. Morley arrived again on the scene. Mr. Warren called out to him to get inside the yamen and

secure help. The doctor started forward, and had all but achieved his purpose, when Shu caught him by the queue—for the doctor wears native dress—and in a moment the students were upon him, and he was carried away by main force from the yamen.

This diversion, however, gave Mr. Warren his chance, for whilst all were intent on preventing Dr. Morley from entering, Mr. Warren slipped away from his guard and dashed inside. The prefect was not, as it happened, at home ; but he had been summoned, and, as soon as he returned, he started off to release Dr. Morley. Making his way to a neighbouring temple, the official found the doctor so suspended by the queue from one of the cross-beams that he could only just stand on tip-toe. He had been kept in this position long enough to make it very painful, to say nothing of the indignity of such treatment. Having released Dr. Morley the official went on to save the buildings, but found that the

mob had already destroyed a large part of the woodwork.

That same night, placards were posted in all parts of the city arranging for a repetition of the riot, but this the watchfulness of the authorities prevented. The next evening a class-meeting was held in the chapel, and not one member was missing! With grateful hearts all united in praise to God for the deliverance of the missionaries. On this occasion there was no delay in compensating the mission, and the missionaries rejoiced to ask for mercy for all who were guilty, save that a proclamation was put out placing the blame for the trouble on 'a student nicknamed the fourth great heavenly prince.' The disgrace which would have come to Shu's family if their name had figured on the document was thus obviated, but none the less effectively he and his relatives knew that the authorities were angered with him. Three months later the house was ready, and Mrs. Warren was the first lady to take up

her residence in it, though not the first European lady to visit Tehngan.

A period of consolidation and extension of the work followed. The first new chapel was opened at a small town named Tang Hsien Tsen, the second at Sui Chow, farther up the Fu river, a third was the town of Yin Cheng, while in the country districts other openings were eagerly seized. The work at Yin Cheng was commenced in this wise. On Easter Eve, 1895, Mr. Warren received a letter which had been written from that town by a man named Hsi, and which stated that there were quite a number of people there waiting for baptism, and asked that a preacher should be sent at once and a chapel provided. The letter was surprising, because frequent visits had been paid to the place, but no one named Hsi had been met, and no one in the town had desired to study the truth. However, Mr. Warren went to investigate. About four miles from the town he met on the road a soldier whom he knew, and as he came

from Yin Cheng, he asked if he knew a Mr. Hsi. The answer was not cheering : 'Oh yes, he is looking out for you ; he has got into very low water lately, and wants to sell his house to you.'

To avoid disappointing Mr. Hsi, after accepting his hospitality, Mr. Warren stayed for the night outside the town, and sent in a message to say that he had no wish to purchase property, but would gladly come to talk about the doctrine. The reply was an invitation to breakfast. On arrival it was found that Hsi had most crude ideas about Christianity. He had purchased a few books, and had read them hurriedly, but he was able to tell Mr. Warren that the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit were not 'three men, but one God' ! He said that some thirty or forty people were waiting to be taught, and that they were all most respectable people. Asked what he would do if an opium-smoker or gambler came, he replied, 'Promptly send him away. I'll see that you shall never have any such

people near you.' Mr. Warren did his best to give the man a different view of our aims, but on two points he objected to any additional light: he denied any personal need of salvation, for he was much respected by his neighbours, and he could not believe that he might have to suffer persecution if he professed Christianity.

This did not seem a promising beginning, but it proved to be a good one, for as the months went by the idea of selling the house receded, the truths of Christianity were grasped, the sense of sin became deeper as Christ became more real, and in due course Mr. Hsi was baptized. And though persecution did come upon him, both before and after his baptism, it was borne with meekness and patience.

At Tang Hsien Tsen, after the chapel was opened, a young inquirer, Tsang, was selected as the butt of insults not meant for him alone, but as a warning to the people not to enter the church. First came his arrest by the mandarin, resulting

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in his suffering a severe beating by the police—the charge, which the mandarin believed, being subsequently admitted by the accuser to have been utterly false. Then an attempt was made to force him to join in an idolatrous ceremony, and after his refusal he was robbed twice. These robberies being brought to the notice of the police, they first treated Tsang insolently, and later, on his refusing to pay them a bribe, gave him such a thrashing that he was unconscious for hours. At this stage the missionaries mentioned the affair to a higher official, who investigated the matter, and reported, ‘Had Mr. Tsang had no connexion with the church, and had he been the lowest coolie, the treatment he has received would have been utterly unjustifiable.’ Search was then made for the robber, who proved to be no other than an underling of the police mandarin ! The matter, after this awkward revelation, was soon put right by the police. Mr. Tsang, be it added, gave to the work of God

one-fourth of the sum paid him as compensation for his unjust punishment.

The year 1897 witnessed an outbreak of violence throughout the circuit. Bands of armed men entered the homes of the members, spoiled them of their goods, and endeavoured to make them abjure their faith. These scoundrels levied blackmail on all Christians, and not only threatened vengeance on all who had dealings with the European pastors, but also put a price on John Berkin's head. Patience having been exhausted, and mercy being interpreted as fear, the matter was reluctantly placed in the hands of the consul, who secured the active intervention of the prefect, and the punishment of the ringleaders. This time of trial, of course, sifted the church thoroughly, and left a residue of strong believers.

A year later there was another outbreak of student wrath in Tehngan itself. This time, Hardy Jowett was the victim. He was crossing the city towards the mission

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house, when he met a crowd of students leaving the examination hall. One of them called Mr. Jowett a 'foreign devil,' but no notice was taken. Then he got in front of Mr. Jowett, yelling, 'Beat the foreign devil ! Kill him ! Kill him !' At this Mr. Jowett stopped and requested the student to be quiet, whereupon some one led the young man aside. But he broke loose from his friend, picked up a stone, and threw it. Instantly his example was followed by others, and stones came thick and fast. The missionary turned and expostulated, but the reply was an attempt to hustle him, so he again walked on. Coming to a stone bridge, an attempt was made to push Mr. Jowett over the side, but it failed. While the crowd were crossing the bridge Mr. Jowett gained somewhat, and might have got away at this juncture, but he was met by another crowd, who had heard the yells of his pursuers. Hemmed in by the mob, the number of stones which found a mark increased, and at last Mr. Jowett was

struck full on the side of the head by a half brick, thrown by a Buddhist priest. For a moment he swayed, but managed to get into a house and shut the door. To his horror he found that it had no back door! He sat down to rest for a moment, but there was a sudden struggle at the front. Thinking that the crowd was breaking in, Mr. Jowett made a hole in the mud wall at the back of the room he was in, escaped through this into a passage, and, prompted by the one thought that he must not go near the mission houses, lest the crowd should follow him there, made for the gate of the city. He was seen, and the pursuit renewed, but he was successful in his object. Later in the day Mr. Jowett learnt that the struggle he had heard was not due to the crowd entering the house, but to one of the members having bravely faced the mob, and, by risking his own life, deterred them from entering the house. This member was badly bruised, but both he and his pastor were soon all right again.

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Towards the close of the same year a chapel was opened in Hsi Ho, another town, making, with those opened earlier, a chain of stations eighty miles long in one direction from Tehngan, and this besides the development in other directions. The inevitable result was that the circuit was divided, the new circuit taking Sui Chow as its centre.

The Boxer year was not passed so peacefully in these circuits as in the rest of the district. After the withdrawal of the Europeans by order of the consul, attempts were made to break into the hospital and houses at Tehngan, the house of one of the Sui Chow ministers was robbed of all it contained and destroyed, the members' houses were freely looted, several members were beaten, one old man was hung in his own house, but cut down by his friends before life was extinct, while two inquirers and one little boy were killed. With the victory of the Allies at Peking the tide turned, and by the end of the year the missionaries had returned, the chapels

were being repaired, and the claims of the members for compensation investigated by the missionaries and the mandarins. All these matters were duly adjusted, and since then peace has prevailed in both the circuits.

Twenty-five years have sped away since Hu Teh Lin met his fellow provincial in the streets of Tehngan. Then there was no chapel, no missionary, no member of our church in the three counties which the two circuits now cover. To-day there are twelve chapels with 282 members. When it is remembered how much unrest there has been, how bitterly persecution has raged, how again and again the Church has been sifted, we must indeed feel that God has been with the workers.

CHAPTER VI

A FRIENDLY RECEPTION

AWAY up the Han river lies Nganluh, a city which presents a sharp contrast with Tehngan. Though nearly two hundred miles past Hanchuan, the eyes of two men were early turned thitherwards—David Hill and Charles W. Mitchil. The latter paid his first visits to Nganluh and other towns around it in the eighties, and he was seconded in his efforts by Mr. Miles. The difficulty of visiting so distant a place can be gathered from the fact that it not unfrequently takes three weeks to journey there from Hankow. The alternate route is to go first to Tehngan and then to walk eighty miles across the hills. At one time the Tehngan minister was responsible for administering the Sacraments in Nganluh !

It was therefore with great joy that George Miles paid the rent for a house in the city, and settled down in January, 1891, to preach the gospel there and in the other counties of the prefecture. In one of his first letters, Mr. Miles mentions the friendliness of the people, both in the town and in the country—a friendliness which has been continued unbroken from that day to this. How fascinated Mr. Miles was with his sphere can be seen in the fact that he deferred his furlough four years in order not to interrupt the work !

One of the first inquirers was named Yang, who lived in the country about eight miles from Nganluh. His interest in Christianity was aroused by a volume on Christian evidences (by the venerable Dr. Martin) given to his son when in Wuchang, and which he had read and re-read. Hearing that the missionaries had settled in the town, he first sent for some tracts, and, being satisfied with these, came to the chapel himself. In the spring of one year Mr. Miles asked him

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which part of the Bible he liked best. He answered that he preferred the Old Testament narratives. On these Mr. Miles conversed with him, and then commended the gospel narratives to his notice. Later in the year the question was repeated, and the answer was promptly given, 'I like the New Testament best now.' This man had a long struggle with his fears before he could take down his ancestral tablet, and brave the ridicule of his neighbours, but at last grace conquered. On February 24, 1895, he was received into the church as the first-fruits of over ten years' work. A chapel has since been erected by native subscriptions in his village.

In 1899 a chapel was opened in the neighbouring town of Sha Yang, the first resident there being George Barnard. In the earlier part of the Boxer year, two pleasing incidents occurred. A service was held from time to time in the house of a member. Next door to him lived a Mrs. Chou. Hearing sounds of singing through the partition between her house

and Mr. Rao's, she was prompted by curiosity to listen. In this way she became deeply interested in Christianity, and her belief in idols began to waver. She then became a secret worshipper behind the partition, kneeling to pray when the Christians knelt, and standing when they stood to sing. After a while she wondered whether she was doing right in thus worshipping in secret, and one day asked a Christian if she might join in the services. A hearty invitation was of course given, and in due time Mrs. Chou became a member.

In another country house dwelt a Mr. Szu. When he had decided to embrace Christianity, he invited a number of Christians to his house for a cup of tea, and when they arrived proceeded to chop up his image of the goddess of mercy and boil the kettle with the fragments !

Through 1900 Nganluh maintained its reputation for friendliness, the members throughout the circuit escaping without any persecution. In 1901 Mr. Miles'

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long pastorate came to an end when he took furlough, but under a fresh pastorate the circuit has maintained its reputation for quietness and peace. Such conditions are favourable to Christian work, and it is largely due to them that in the ten years that have elapsed since the first baptism, three chapels and two preaching-places have been opened, while the schedules for 1905 show 70 adult and 38 junior members, with 20 on trial. There is every prospect that in quietness and peace this young circuit will grow till it becomes a praise in the earth.

CHAPTER VII

HUNAN

IN 1891 the Wusueh riots occurred as the direct result of the bitter opposition to foreigners fostered by literature emanating from the province of Hunan. For two years the European missionaries had been constantly baffled in their attempts to enter the province, as were traders and even consuls. Then God moved on the hearts of the Chinese church at Tehngan, and led them to attempt the task. One day a young member, Li Kwang Ti, came to Mr. Warren and said that a few nights earlier he had seen a vision of Christ, who had bidden him go to Hunan and sell Christian books. Somewhat perplexed how to respond, for the brother was young and untested, Mr. Warren referred

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him to Tsang Yih Tsz, who in due course reported in quiet but earnest tones, 'I think this call comes from God, and I should like to go with brother Li if God will open the way.' So at the preachers' meeting Mr. Tsang introduced the subject, and Mr. Warren suggested that the Tehngan circuit should pay the expenses of the journey. Some wished to invite the Hankow circuit to help, but Mr. Tsang urged that Tehngan alone was able to do it, and finally carried the point. So on April 12, 1893, the first Chinese missionaries of our Church left for Hunan.

Knowing that other colporteurs had been turned back at the borders, these brethren adopted the simple expedient of travelling right into the heart of the province by boat and then commencing their bookselling as they slowly journeyed overland back towards the border. The amount of opposition which they met was comparatively trifling, and they returned with hearts full of gratitude. They brought back with them a copy of a placard which

they had seen, which gave directions that if any members of the 'Devil Religion' were found, they must be thrown into the fire or the water; or if they were not killed, they must be boycotted. 'Let them be to you as dogs or pigs; do not intermarry with them, buy nothing from them, sell nothing to them, let them be as outcasts.' To discover colporteurs, innkeepers were advised to make each guest worship the idols. The document concluded by calling on the Emperor not to hesitate to go to war with the barbarians, for 'Hunan would arise, and from each department volunteers would come and utterly destroy the hated foe.'

A year sped away, and on a Sunday afternoon in April, Mr. Tsang once more addressed the church at Tehngan on the needs of Hunan, and again they responded with their gifts and bade him go forth again as their missionary, accompanied this time by his nephew, Tsang Fuh Tou. They were absent this time from May 15 to June 26, when they returned rejoicing.

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At Chang Sha, the provincial capital, they were warned not to sell books ; and though they tried both going and returning, they only sold one tract there. They visited every person who had expressed an interest in their message on their first journey, but for the most part found them still worshipping idols. 'What can you expect,' said Mr. Tsang, 'when you remember that they have had no one to give them a helping word, and many a one exerting himself to hinder them ?'

These journeys were not, however, fruitless of blessing to Hunan, for when Mr. Tsang returned his mind was full of a scheme for the formation of a Chinese Missionary Society in our Church, to send men to preach in Hunan. And that God was the author of the plan is seen in the fact that at the same time, but without any intercommunication, the same idea was broached in the Wuchang church, and entered other minds. A series of meetings was forthwith arranged, Mr. Tsang being the deputation, and the Society was put on

a good foundation, one of its fundamental rules being that no European may subscribe to its funds ! As its ability has increased, its staff has been augmented, so that three men are now permanently employed by it in Hunan.

After the round of meetings, Mr. Tsang was about to start again for Hunan, when trouble arose. Just after some colporteurs, sent by the Hankow Tract Society, had left Chang Sha, an attack was made at night on the idols of the city temple, these idols being the guardians of the moats, walls, and other defences of the city. The images were maimed and covered with filth. At daybreak the news spread like wild-fire, and crowds of angry citizens gathered. Of course, none but a Christian could have done such a deed ! Search was therefore made for the colporteurs, but they had gone quietly on their way to Hankow. As no Christians could be found, some of those who had purchased Christian books were arrested and punished, while to further appease the

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gods, the governor of the province—an official of the first rank in the Empire—went in straw sandals, such as the lowest coolie wears, to apologize to the idols for the insult.

When the trouble had subsided, and it was feasible for Mr. Tsang to start, his nephew could not leave, and for some time he sought in vain for a colleague. Then Mr. Tu Sen Kai volunteered. His had been a remarkable history. Early in life he ran away to become a sailor, but was recovered by his father. As a young man he lived a godless, wicked life, though he constantly worshipped idols. After trying one or two businesses, he became partner in a large trading junk, but ere long she was attacked by pirates and sunk. After other vicissitudes, he, at fifty years of age, settled down in the family business as a timber-merchant. Troubles still pursued him. His wife and five of his children died within a brief period, and just after, as he was travelling with a large sum of money to purchase timber, his boat

was attacked by robbers, who tied his hands, threw him overboard, and sailed away with all that he had. The water was shallow and he managed to wade ashore, but he had to sell almost all his lands to meet his liabilities. Reduced to poverty, he consulted some priests as to the causes of his misfortunes, and became convinced that all was due to his sins. Abandoning all meat foods and worshipping at the seventy shrines in the Temple of Hell brought him no peace, so he decided to end his life. To this end he climbed to the top story of a pagoda in Wuchang, resolved to throw himself down after dark. While waiting his chance he commenced to chant a prayer; the priest heard, and, ascending, made Tu leave the pagoda, thus frustrating his plan. A little time after, he strolled into the Wuchang chapel, listened for a while to the preaching, and then interrupted with the remark, 'I do not want to know anything else, but if you can tell me how to get saved from sin, I shall be glad.' So the

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preacher took him into the vestry and expounded to him the way of salvation. That was the commencement of a very useful Christian life, which at the time of writing is not yet ended. One of his sons is now in our ministry, and another son and a grandson are preachers. Such was the man who heard and responded to the missionary call and travelled in Hunan with Mr. Tsang from November, 1895, to February, 1896. As on the previous journeys, the way was peacefully opened. At Chang Sha, though the unrest had subsided, they found notices offering a large reward to any one who would betray Christians to the scholars and students, but at other places they were able to fulfil their mission without molestation.

And now we come to the time when a different line of attack upon Hunan was commenced by the Synod. It had been suggested just after the Wusueh riots by W. H. Watson, and for its execution he had constantly worked and prayed. It will be remembered that the Wusueh circuit had,

prior to William Argent's martyrdom, stretched out to the town of Hsing Kuo. Beyond this place lie the county towns of Tung Shan, Chung Yang, and Tung Cheng, the last being within easy distance of the north-east border of Hunan. As the approaches to Chang Sha were so carefully guarded by the literary classes, Mr. Watson proposed that we should establish ourselves step by step in the intervening counties to Hupeh, and then evangelize the parts of Hunan which adjoin the Tung Cheng county. For five years the towns were visited, first by one and then by another of the missionaries, and at the Synod of 1898 the decision was taken to rent premises in these cities and establish work there.

The gospel soon found a lodging-place in Chung Yang, and the next year the earliest baptisms took place. The first was Mr. Shen, who had been a reader of the 'Sacred Edict,' an ancient Imperial discourse on morals which is read in the streets by paid readers on certain days in

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each month. When visiting the town in 1887, Mr. Watson heard this man reading, and, going up to his stand, presented him with a copy of 'The Gate of Virtue,' a tract specially prepared for scholars. It was accepted and read, with the result that Mr. Shen resigned his post and publicly declared himself to be a Christian. The second was Mr. Lo, a shop-keeper, who, after hearing the gospel, cleared his house of all idolatrous images. The very day he did so his house caught fire and was somewhat damaged. His friends said that this was a judgement, and wanted the idols brought back, but Lo strictly refused. He later decided to close his shop on Sundays, putting up a notice why he did so, and thus calling much attention to our message. The third was a Mr. Chen, whose father had been a county mandarin. In the days before Mr. Cox arrived in Hankow, this man had heard Dr. John preach, and was so favourably impressed that in the intervening thirty-seven years he had never lost his interest

in the gospel, and when our chapel was opened, at once united with the church.

Almost at the time when these three men were quietly being received into the Chung Yang church, a Christian named Hwang Chih Kwei was learning by bitter experience that hostility to Christianity was not dead in Hunan. His whole story cannot be told here, but he was a Hunanese who had heard the gospel while engaged in business in Hanyang, and had believed. Finding it necessary to visit his home in Hunan, about 700 miles from Hankow, he set forth and arrived there in safety. But as soon as he had eaten his first meal, his mother and other relatives began to examine him. 'What is this we hear about your swallowing foreign doctrines? What sort of doctrine do you believe? We hear that you do not worship idols! Nor even ancestors! Is it true that you are an ancestor-neglector?' So the questions poured out, and Hwang, nothing loth, chatted about the great theme of our faith. The next day Hwang

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made a mistake, for he showed his contempt for idols by breaking the neck of a household god ! True, it was his own family possession, but the act angered the neighbours, who sent for ropes to tie him up so that they might drown him. Hwang prayed earnestly to God, and at last some one suggested that before they drowned him, the local scholars should be invited to reason with him. The scholars came, but failed to shake his faith, and were disconcerted with quotations from the classics, showing that Confucius did not worship idols. Going away, these scholars placarded the town that Hwang was bewitched, and after that if he showed himself outside the house, he was followed by a gang of youths yelling, ' Madman ! Ancestor seller ! Foreign devil's pupil ! ' So he tried staying in the shelter of his home, but the scholars persuaded his mother that she must on no account eat with him, or she too would be bewitched. At last poor Hwang tramped away to the house of one of his sisters, only to find

that his reputation had preceded him. Returning to his home, his mother forbade him to enter until he had worshipped the idols. 'And if you will not repent,' she concluded, 'you are no son of mine.' He refused to worship, and was driven away from the town, hungry, disowned, penniless. Most of the long journey back to Hanyang he had to work for his food, though twice he met missionaries, who were so touched with his transparent genuineness that they helped him. Truly it was not easy in those days to serve Christ in Hunan !

The advance on Hunan from the new stations was soon commenced, Dr. Morley and Lo Yu Shan being the first to take a long journey in the province. They were soon followed by Mr. Watson, who travelled a circuit of one hundred miles on foot without serious molestation, selling almost every book and tract he had with him, receiving courtesy from the common people. Almost all the rudeness he met with was from the officials and scholars.

These journeys were followed in the beginning of 1900 by a much more extensive one taken by Messrs. Watson, North, and Warren. The route lay from Chung Yang through city after city in Hunan till the capital was reached, and thence down to Yo Chou and so back to Hankow. The number of books sold was very large. An interesting moment was when the missionaries entered the gates of the capital. Mr. Watson was in Chinese dress, and there was no opposition to his entry, as other missionaries so dressed had entered ; but his two companions were in English attire, and no missionary so attired had ever entered those gates. The brethren put the objecting official into a corner. He was asked either to allow them to enter or to endorse their passports with an official declaration that the authorities of this great city were unable to fulfil their treaty obligation to protect foreigners. Not wishing to disgrace his city by adopting the latter course, the mandarin summoned some soldiers, and,

escorted by them, the missionaries entered the gates and traversed the whole city selling books and twice stopping to preach.

It looked, when the trio returned with their story of success, as if Hunan were opening ; but the 'Boxer' troubles followed almost at once, and missionary work was at a standstill. At Tung Cheng the months passed and there was no trouble. But at Chung Yang the threats were so terrible that the members burnt the class-book to avoid it being used as evidence against them, the chapel was looted, and the preacher badly ill-treated. Before the end of the year, the changed attitude of the Court towards the Powers was duly reflected in these two cities, and the work was renewed with vigour, the Synod appointing E. C. Cooper and Lo Yu Shan to begin a mission in Chang Sha and develop the work in the cities between that place and the Hupeh border.

So it came to pass that on January 15, 1902, Lo Yu Shan arrived in Chang Sha with a note of introduction to one of the

missionaries who had already reached that place.¹ He found a house to let, and when Mr. Cooper arrived a few days later the necessary papers were signed, and, without trouble or delay, our Mission was accommodated in a commanding position.

The entrance to Liu Yang and Ping Chiang was not accomplished so quietly. At the former place the native preacher was badly thrashed by a crowd who did not like to see a chapel opened in their midst ; at the latter the gentry and scholars issued a proclamation accusing the church of the very vilest crimes, and so intimidated the intending landlord, that the shop offered to us was withdrawn, and for a time no other could be secured. But in each case the trouble soon subsided, and premises were secured and occupied. A few months later Mr. Watson resigned the Chairmanship of the District, so as to be free to take up the work at Chang Sha,

¹ In point of time the C.I.M., the L.M.S. and the C.M.A. missionaries had reached Chang Sha before us. Its size and importance made it the centre from which each mission must work out.

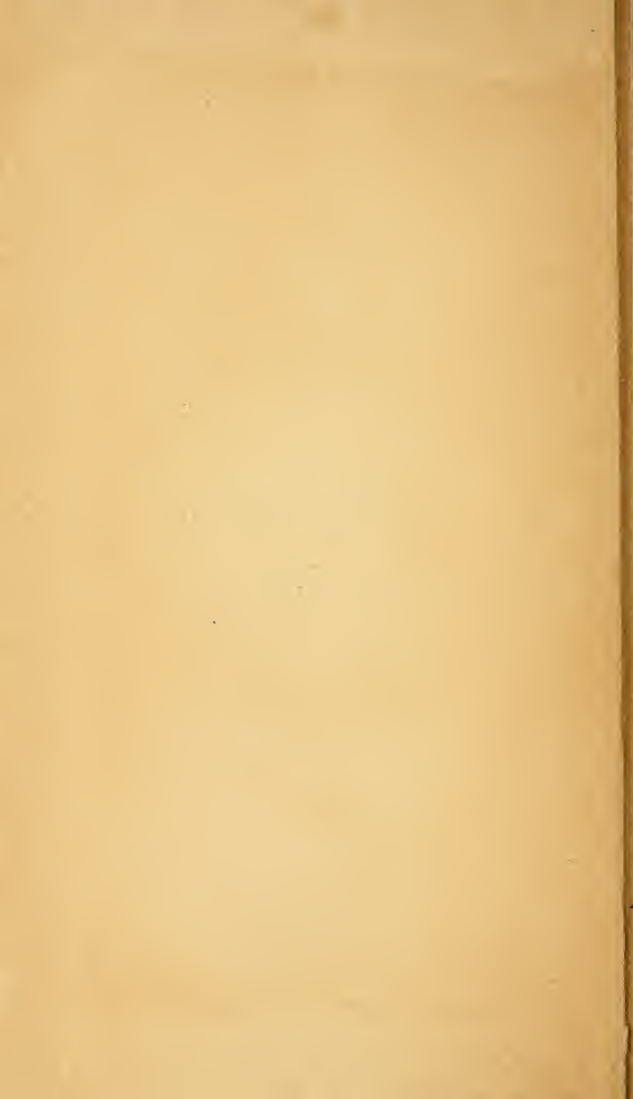
while Mr. Cooper with Mr. Gibson proceeded to open up work at Pao Ching, two hundred miles to the south of the capital. A year later Mr. Cooper left Mr. Gibson at Pao Ching, and himself proceeded four days' journey farther south to preach the gospel in Yung Chow.

Easter Sunday, 1903, was a red-letter day at Chang Sha, for Mr. Lo then baptized three men—the first-fruits of our work in Hunan. This was, alas ! almost the last public act of that devoted Chinese pastor ; and after a few months of failing health he passed to his rest on August 30 of the same year.

A great traveller tells how he stood in a gorgeous Buddhist temple in Western China. The priests were chanting the mass, the candles blazed in the idol shrine, and the scent of the burning incense hung thick in the air. As he gazed, he parodied the celebrated phrase of one of earth's potentates, and exclaimed, ' O Buddha, thou hast conquered ! ' True—

but not as the traveller meant. Buddha's conquest has not been over Christianity, nor over the power of sin, but over all that is noble and pure, all that is honest and of good report. As his worship has spread in this land, purity has been vanquished, and in his train have come immorality, lust, murder, suicide, cruelty.

And now a new strife has begun. The Galilean has thrown down the gage of battle. Day by day the armies of the Christ are battling against superstition, and, as we have shown, glorious trophies are even now being won. And the story of the past nerves us for the future ; for He who has in these last forty years gone forth conquering in Central China, will still go on to conquer. And though it may sometimes seem as if the glorious day when Christ shall be crowned in every Chinese heart comes but slowly, yet to the eye of faith the hill-tops are already bright with the coming glory.





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